

Ontario's Tap Water: Safe to Drink



Did you know Ontario's tap water is safe to drink? Drinking tap water saves you money and is good for the environment.

Our tap water is well protected and is among the best in the world. You can have confidence in the quality and safety of Ontario's tap water.

How is Ontario's drinking water protected?

Ontario has an excellent system in place to protect drinking water. Ontario's clear, strong rules and stringent standards safeguard drinking water as it makes its way from the source to your tap.

People who operate drinking water systems receive training that meets high professional standards. Ministry of the Environment experts inspect all municipal drinking water plants at least once a year. The Chief Drinking Water Inspector reports annually on drinking water quality and inspection results for drinking water systems. In 2010-11:

- More than 639,000 tests were conducted on samples from Ontario's drinking water systems.
- 99.87 per cent of water quality tests from municipal water systems met rigorous standards.

To see how our drinking water continues to meet our strict standards, read the [Chief Drinking Water Inspector's Annual Report](#).

Where does my drinking water come from?

Most of Ontario's drinking water comes from lakes, rivers or wells.

The Great Lakes contain 95 per cent of North America's supply of fresh surface water. Most Ontario residents get their drinking water from the Great Lakes.

View the [drinking water quality map](#) to find the lake, river or well that supplies your community.

ontario.ca/drinkingwater

How is my drinking water treated?

- **Step 1:** Water is taken from a river, a lake or a well.
- **Step 2:** Substances added to water make small particles clump together into larger particles. These larger particles fall to the bottom and are later removed.
- **Step 3:** Other particles are filtered out by passing the water through a bed of sand, gravel, charcoal, or a membrane.
- **Step 4:** Chlorine disinfects the water. A small amount of chlorine stays in the water you drink.

This is what happens in most treatment systems. Click on the [drinking water quality map](#) to find out how drinking water is treated in your community.

What can I do if I am worried about my tap water?

If you receive your water from a municipality, [contact their office](#). You can also check the Blue Pages in your telephone book for your municipality's contact

information. Otherwise, contact your local [public health unit](#).

Homes built before the 1950s are more likely to have lead pipes and service lines. Learn more about [lead and drinking water](#) and [testing your tap water](#) for lead.

What can I do to protect Ontario's drinking water?

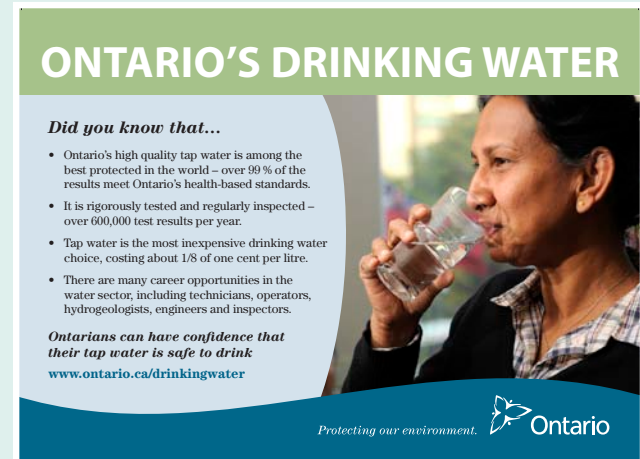
Here are some ways you can reduce waste and save money by drinking Ontario's tap water:

- Carry a reusable water bottle and refill for free through the [Blue W program](#). Look for the Blue W decal in the windows of participating businesses and public places.
- Put pitchers of water in your fridge or add ice cubes instead of running your tap until water cools.
- Do not put paint, oil, or other waste down storm drains.

Multilingual Postcards for Newcomers to Ontario

Do you know groups in your community who want to learn about Ontario's high quality tap water?

Click on a postcard to enlarge the image. Or contact the Ministry of the Environment Public Information Centre toll free at **1-800-565-4923** or **416-325-4000** in Toronto if you would like free copies.



English



Arabic



Chinese (Modern)



French



Gujarati



Punjabi



Russian



Spanish



Tagalog



Tamil



Urdu